

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA NIACT IMMEDIATE

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JIDDA PASS USREP/JECOR

SUBJECT:PROPOSED SANCST PROJECT AGREEMENT

REFS: (A) OSAA 069 (B) OSAA 079

1. DEPT'S VIEWS ON PROPOSED SANCST AGREEMENT ARE CONTAINED
IN FOLLOWING LETTER FROM DEPASSTSEC SOBER TO ASSISTANT
SECRETARY PARSKY, TRANSMITTED FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

QTE: DEAR GERRY: WE HAVE GIVEN CONSIDERABLE THOUGHT TO
THE PROPOSED JEC PROJECT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NATIONAL
SCIENCE FOUNDATION AND THE SAUDI ARABIAN NATIONAL CENTER
FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SANCST). WE UNDERSTAND THAT
YOUR STAFF, LIKE THE NSF ITSELF, HAS RECOGNIZED THAT THE
PRESENT DRAFT REQUIRES A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF RE-CASTING, AND
THAT THERE ARE ALREADY OTHER DRAFTS MORE RECENT THAN THE
ONE WE HAVE RECEIVED. WE WELCOME A CONTINUING DIALOGUE.

WE SUPPORT THE DESIRE TO RESPOND PROMPTLY AND EFFECTIVELY
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TO SAUDI ARABIA'S REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN IMPROVING BOTH

THE QUALITY AND THE QUANTITY OF THE KINGDOM'S SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL FACILITIES, INSTRUCTION, AND PERSONNEL. THE PROPOSED PROJECT AGREEMENT CONTAINS MANY GOOD IDEAS TO ASSIST IN ACHIEVING THESE OBJECTIVES. BASED ON OUR EXPERIENCE AND AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION WE DO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT SOME CHANGES IN EMPHASIS ARE REQUIRED IN THE PROPOSED

AGREEMENT WITH THE SAUDIS.

OUR CONCERNS, AND THOSE OF THE EMBASSY -- WITH WHICH WE HAVE CONSULTED ON THIS MATTER -- ARE THREE-FOLD:

(1) SAUDI MANPOWER RESOURCES MUST BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THE JOB SET OUT IN THE AGREEMENT.

(2) IT IS IMPORTANT TO IDENTIFY PROJECTS THAT CAN ACTUALLY BE EXECUTED AND PRODUCE TANGIBLE RESULTS WITHIN A SHORT-RUN TIME FRAME; THIS MEANS IDENTIFYING SOME SMALL PROJECTS (PROBABLY TO BE MANAGED BY AMERICAN PERSONNEL).

(3) THE SAUDIS SHOULD SEE THE BASIC INITIATIVE AS COMING FROM THEMSELVES AND NOT FROM US; A COROLLARY IS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE PRESSED INTO AN ORGANIZATION LIKE THE SANCST BEFORE THEY ARE PREPARED TO MANAGE IT.

LET ME ELABORATE ON EACH OF THESE CONCERNS.

SAUDIS HAVE A HISTORY OF BEING UNABLE TO DELIVER ON PREVIOUS PROMISES TO DELIVER TRAINED MANPOWER. PROGRAM DIFFICULTIES RESULTING FROM A SAUDI INABILITY TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY MANPOWER WOULD PUT PRESSURE ON US TO COME UP WITH THE NEEDED PEOPLE. THE MANPOWER PROBLEM MUST BE CAREFULLY DISCUSSED WITH THE SAUDIS BEFORE ANY PROJECTS ARE AGREED UPON SO THAT THERE ARE NO DOUBTS ON EITHER SIDE ABOUT THE SOURCE OF THE MANPOWER REQUIRED. IT COULD BE A MISAPPLICATION OF MANPOWER TO TAKE ANYTHING MORE THAN THE VERY MINIMUM OF SCIENTIFICALLY-TRAINED SAUDIS FROM A UNIVERSITY STAFF TO FILL PLANNING OR COORDINATING POSITIONS IN A SANCST. SIMILARLY, WE BELIEVE THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF DEVELOPING A "NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL

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INFORMATION SYSTEM" (WORK PLAN II-B) TO BE OPERATED BY SAUDI PERSONNEL, NEEDS TO BE REVIEWED. THIS IS A DESIRABLE LONG-TERM OBJECTIVE BUT IT IS THE TYPE OF SUPPORT FUNCTION FORWHICH THE SAUDIS MAY WISH -- AND HAVE -- TO RELY ON FOREIGN CONTRACT PERSONNEL FOR SOME YEARS. WE WILL NEED TO MAKE A THOROUGH EFFORT, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE SAUDIS, TO IDENTIFY THOSE POSITIONS WHICH BECAUSE OF THEIR POLICY-MAKING ROLE MUST BE FILLED BY SAUDIS; BEYOND

THIS, WE HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO ASSIST TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY IN THE RECRUITMENT OF NON-SAUDI MANPOWER WHERE THIS WILL SERVE THE PURPOSE.

WE BELIEVE IT TO BE IN OUR INTEREST TO SEE THE JOINT ECONOMIC COMMISSION EFFORT IN THIS FIELD PRODUCE A TANGIBLE, VISIBLE IMPACT AT THE EARLIEST PRACTICAL MOMENT. THIS MAY VERY WELL REQUIRE A STRONG USG ROLE IN THE

MANAGEMENT OF COOPERATIVE SCIENCE PROJECTS; SUCH A ROLE INCIDENTALLY WOULD BE EVIDENCE OF OUR ABILITY AND READINESS EFFECTIVELY TO ASSIST SAUDI DEVELOPMENT PLANS. A SPECIAL EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO IDENTIFY SUCH PROJECTS THAT CAN PRODUCE VISIBLE RESULTS IN A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME. WE MAY WISH TO PLACE A TEAM OF SCIENTIFIC AND EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS IN SAUDI ARABIA TO OVERSEE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TASKS WHICH WILL MAKE A READILY APPARENT CONTRIBUTION TOWARD FILLING THE KINGDOM'S NEEDS. EARLY ACTION SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN TO IMPLEMENT "TASK I", THE SCIENTIFIC RESOURCES INVENTORY. TRAINING NEEDS ALSO REQUIRE SPECIAL ATTENTION.

IT WOULD NOT BE IN OUR INTEREST TO PUSH THE SAUDIS INTO CREATING THE SANCST BEFORE THE SAG FULLY UNDERSTANDS WHAT THIS ENTAILS, AND HAS COMMITTED ITSELF TO THIS CONCEPT. THE NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY YOUR STAFF AND THE NSF WILL CONTINUE TO EXIST WHETHER OR NOT THERE IS A SANCST, AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT MUCH USEFUL WORK CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED PRIOR TO ITS CREATION. WE KNOW YOU HAVE ALREADY GIVEN THOUGHT TO THE PROCEDURAL QUESTION OF WHAT ORGANIZATION WOULD CONCLUDE THE AGREEMENT ON THE SAUDI SIDE IF THE SAUDIS SHOULD DELAY THE CREATION OF THE SANCST. WE WOULD NOT WANT TO DELAY ACTION ON READILY IDENTIFIABLE AND UNCLASSIFIED

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DESIRABLE PROJECTS WHICH MIGHT PROCEED MEANWHILE IN COOPERATION WITH EXISTING SAUDI INSTITUTIONS. IT IS IN OUR INTEREST TO MAINTAIN A FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PRESENT PROPOSED PROJECT AGREEMENT, AND A WILLINGNESS TO BREAK OFF PARTS FOR SEPARATE AND EARLY IMPLEMENTATION, IF THE SAUDIS DESIRE.

OUR LAWYER REQUESTS THAT FOR THE MOMENT, THE PHRASE INTER ALIA BE INSERTED BETWEEN THE WORDS "SHALL" AND "RECEIVE" IN THE SINGLE-SENTENCE ARTICLE XII CLAUSE DEALING WITH PATENTS. THIS IS BECAUSE THE PROPOSED ARTICLE FAILS TO ADDRESS A NUMBER OF ISSUES WHICH MAY REQUIRE FURTHER REFINEMENT, SUCH AS THE QUESTION OF PATENT RIGHTS IN THIRD COUNTRIES, BACKGROUND PATENTS, AND THE LIKE. WHILE YOU MAY PRESENT TO THE SAUDIS A DRAFT CONTAINING THE ARTICLE

IN THIS FORM, THEY SHOULD BE TOLD THAT WE MAY WISH TO PROPOSE A MORE ELABORATE VERSION PRIOR TO SIGNING THE AGREEMENT. YOUR OWN LEGAL AUTHORITIES SHOULD DISCUSS THIS ISSUE WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S MR. STEVEN BURTON (L/OES) AT THEIR MUTUAL CONVENIENCE.

HAVING IN MIND THAT A COPY OF A PROPOSED PROJECT AGREEMENT HAS ALREADY BEEN PRESENTED TO THE SAUDIS IN RIYADH, I AM TRANSMITTING A COPY OF THIS LETTER BY TELEGRAM TO OUR EMBASSY, WHICH WILL RELAY IT TO USREP/JECOR, IN ORDER

THAT THOSE PARTICIPATING IN TALKS WITH THE SAUDIS WILL HAVE THE BENEFIT OF KNOWING THE DEPARTMENT'S POSITION ON THIS SUBJECT. SINCERELY, SIDNEY SOBER. UNQTE. KISSINGER

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